
Notes

The Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) is a household survey of the non-institutionalized resident population of the United States conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. The survey was designed to improve the measurement of the economic situation of persons, families, and households in the United States and to provide a tool for managing and evaluating government transfer and service programs.

The 2001 SIPP panel consists of 9 interviews, or waves, each of which gathered 4 months of retrospective data. The sample includes approximately 36,700 households, divided into 4 rotation groups. The Social Security Administration (SSA) has matched SIPP data to its administrative records. Receipt of Social Security Disability Insurance (DI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) disability benefits and the DI and SSI benefit amounts are based on December 2001 SSA records for sample members who provided a valid Social Security Number (SSN), while those items are based on SIPP self-reports for sample members who did not provide a valid SSN. All other characteristics are taken from the SIPP. SIPP sample weights are used to produce population estimates. The weights have been adjusted by DI beneficiary type so the population totals match counts of noninstitutionalized DI beneficiaries from SSA records.

Poverty calculations based on the SIPP use survey-reported family income for 2001, with the survey-reported DI and SSI benefit amounts adjusted to reflect SSA administrative data for those cases in which sample members provided valid SSNs. The poverty thresholds are provided in the SIPP and are adjusted for family size and composition. In 2001, the poverty threshold for a one-person family under age 65 was \$9,214. For a two-person family aged 65 or older, the poverty threshold was \$10,715. For a four-person family with two related children under the age of 18, the poverty threshold was \$17,960.

In tabulations of Medicaid coverage, the SIPP Medicaid variable has been recoded to reflect the fact that SSI beneficiaries in certain states, sometimes referred to as Section 1634 states, are automatically covered by Medicaid. Thirty-two states plus the District of Columbia provide automatic Medicaid coverage for SSI beneficiaries, accounting for approximately 78 percent of all SSI beneficiaries.

SIPP and SSA counts of disabled beneficiaries differ because the SIPP excludes people living in institutions or outside the continental United States. In addition, the match rate between the SIPP and SSA records is not perfect. Furthermore, the SIPP estimates are based on a sample and therefore are subject to sampling error. Standard errors can be used to measure this sampling variability. Various sources of nonsampling error also may be important.

Because the SIPP uses a complex sample design, it is inappropriate to calculate standard errors assuming a simple random sample. Doing so will result in estimated standard errors that are biased downward. Readers interested in information about SIPP variance estimates are referred to the Source and Accuracy Statement for the 1996 Public Use Files from the Survey of Income and Program Participation, available on the SIPP Internet site at www.sipp.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/s&a96_040501.pdf. (A source and accuracy statement is not yet available for the 2001 SIPP.) The source and accuracy statement provides information on direct calculation of standard errors for SIPP estimates. It also provides detailed instructions for calculating standard errors using generalized variance parameters and simplified tables.
